

FW: Green Belt review

Jeni Jackson

Sent: 20 July 2015 10:23**To:** Planning Policy**Jeni Jackson BSc (Hons) MRTPI | Head of Planning Services |**

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From: Peter Graves [REDACTED]**Sent:** 19 July 2015 10:29**To:** Jeni Jackson**Cc:** [REDACTED] Cllr Ashley Bowes**Subject:** Green Belt review

Dear Ms Jackson,

I am writing in order to object to the proposals made by your department to allow the two fields either side of Upshott Lane in Pyrford to be released from the protection of Green Belt status.

As I am sure you are aware, Green Belt was established in 1935 by the GLR Planning Committee and its express aim was *to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, and consequently the most important attribute of green belts is their openness.*

The contemporary accepted function of Green Belt is:

-) check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
-) prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another
-) assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
-) preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
-) assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Once an area of land has been defined as green belt, the stated opportunities and benefits include:

o providing opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population

o providing opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas

o the retention of attractive landscapes and the enhancement of landscapes, near to where people live

o the improvement of damaged and derelict land around towns

o the securing of nature conservation interests

o the retention of land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.

Along with **98% of Pyrford's residents** who have endorsed our Neighbourhood Plan (which was compiled in line with Government guidelines following the **2011 Localism Act**) I am hugely concerned about the short and long term implications of your proposal to introduce the very sort of unrestricted sprawl that the **1935 Act** was intent on arresting.

I note with interest that your own consultants declined to recommend the more easterly of the two fields. Consequently, one can safely assume that any appeal *against* development would doubtless succeed, leaving WBC and more specifically, its council tax payers with a large but unnecessary bill in countering such an appeal.

The more westerly of the two fields meets exactly the Green Belt criteria stipulated by the Government: it is a wonderful **barrier to unrestricted sprawl**, it does prevent towns from merging into one another, it does assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, it helps to preserve the nature of Pyrford, **a 1000 year old village** and it certainly acts as an encouragement to our local authority to seek other derelict urban sites. Any attempt to counter these guiding principles and convert this area to a construction site would also be doomed to failure and lead to another astronomical bill to be met by the county's tax payer.

I have attached some pictures taken recently of land owned by the landowner of the fields east of Sandy Lane. They depict a sprawling agricultural mess of torn plastic sheeting and discarded wooden sleepers; an industrial wasteland in a beautiful rural setting. If this is the lack of sensitivity with which the landowner stewards his fields now, how will he be if he were to be granted permission to build? No doubt the surrounding fields and countryside would be transformed into one enormous waste depository containing all of the detritus created by the modern day construction industry.


I am disappointed that you have declined to respond the PNF's correspondence; this would seem to indicate a lack of desire on the part of our Council to consult with its population. Since this was one of the guiding principles of the **2011 Act**, it appears to be a grave failure on the part of the Council.

I would urge you to consider very carefully before making your decision. It will be followed very closely by the population of Pyrford and a decision in favour of releasing the land from Green Belt will be met with a very vocal and determined opposition.

Kind regards

Peter Graves
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